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To: [E-OHPSCA2713.EBSA](#)
Subject: Comment: RIN 1210-AB44
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The question before the HHS is whether organizations and individuals must offer health coverage that violates their moral and religious convictions. Thomas Jefferson, our second President, wrote a letter on 1804 that provides insight into the religious freedom intended by the founders of the United States.

Twelve Ursuline nuns arrived in New Orleans in 1727, a time when New Orleans was still a part of France. The sisters wasted no time in providing the community with urgently needed medical care and, shortly thereafter, in establishing a school and orphanage for girls. After the signing of the Louisiana Purchase Treaty in 1803, the sisters wrote a letter to President Jefferson stating their concern whether their services would be curtailed by the new government. Below please find the text of Jefferson's response:

Washington, May 15, 1804

I have received, holy sisters, the letter you have written me wherein you express anxiety for the property vested in your institution by the former governments of Louisiana. The principles of the constitution and government of the United States are a guarantee to you that it will be preserved to you, sacred and inviolate, and that your institution will be permitted to govern itself according to its own voluntary rules, without interference from the civil authority. Whatever the diversity of shade may appear in the religious opinions of our fellow citizens, the charitable objects of your institution cannot be indifferent to any; and its furtherance of the wholesome purposes of society, by training up its younger members in the way they should go, cannot fail to ensure it the patronage of the government it is under. Be assured it will meet all the protection which my office can give it.

I salute you, holy sisters, with friendship and respect.

Thomas Jefferson

President Jefferson was clear in his high regard of religious freedom being protected by our United States. I urge the HHS to be mindful of our nation's founding principles as it considers rules that prevent religious medical institutions from being able to offer care that does not violate its Constitutionally protected convictions.

Sincerely,
Kenneth Rastatter
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